

Academic Drift of Tanzania's Non-University Higher Education Institutions: Its Impact on the Higher Education System and Development of Middle-Level Workforce

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Abstract

Tanzania's public non-university higher education institutions were established in the late 1960s and early 1970s to train skilled middle-level workforce critical for post-independence Tanzania's social and economic development. These institutions were mandated to train public servants in public administration and management, accountancy and financial management, materials management, community development, social welfare, nursing and clinical medicine, rural development planning, tax administration, journalism, engineering, agriculture and livestock development, among other disciplines, at three qualification levels: certificate, ordinary diploma and advanced diploma levels. Following the liberalisation of the higher education policy in the late 1990s to allow higher education institutions to respond to new labour market demands, non-university institutions drifted into degree-granting institutions, abandoning their three-year advanced diploma programmes in favour of the so-called "*professional degrees*" but retaining their certificates and ordinary diploma programmes. This paper, using extensive documentary and literature reviews and a critical search of the institution's websites, documents the hitherto undocumented phenomenon of academic drift of Tanzania's non-university institutions, its possible causes and impact on the higher education system and the development of middle-level workforce. The paper concludes that the academic drift of non-university higher education institutions in Tanzania has blurred the higher education system, i.e. it has eliminated differentiation and diversity in higher education (the important aspects of an effective higher education system) and curtailed the balanced development of the skilled middle-level workforce.

Keywords: academic drift, non-university higher education institutions, skilled middle-level Workforce.



East African School of Higher Education Studies & Development, Makerere University

Makerere Journal of Higher Education
ISSN: 1816-6822 (Print); 2707-6113 (Online)
12 (1) (2023) 1-26
© The Author(s) 2023
Reprints & permission: EASHESD
<http://ajol.info/majohe>
Conflict of interest: None
Funding: None

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Cite article as: Ishengoma, J.M. (2023). Academic Drift of Tanzania's Non-University Higher Education Institutions: Its Impact on the Higher Education System and Development of Middle-Level Skilled workforce. *Makerere Journal of Higher Education*, 12 (1), 1-26.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/majohe.v12i1.2>

Introduction

Academic drifting, which in the context of this paper refers to the “academisation” or “universitisation” of non-university higher education institutions, their academic programmes and organisational structures (Griffioen and de Jong, 2012) and the general tendency of non-university institutions to strive to become like universities (Christiansen & Newberry, 2015), is now a global phenomenon in the higher education sector. Academic drifting is as old as the higher education sector itself worldwide.

In Tanzania, the hitherto binary higher education system composed of university institutions through the oversight of the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) and non-university institutions mainly offering non-degree vocational and practical-oriented qualifications under the oversight of the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE) started experiencing academic drifting when the government liberalised the provision of higher education through the Education and Training Policy (ETP) (1999) and the National Higher Education Policy of 1999. These two policies flagged off the academic drifting of public non-university institutions in Tanzania. With these two policies in place, public non-university institutions (hitherto non-degree granting higher education institutions) effectively transformed themselves into degree-granting institutions abandoning their three-year advanced diploma programmes in favour of “professional degrees.”

Both policies directly or indirectly support the academic drifting of public non-university institutions by encouraging them to diversify their academic programmes to meet the new demands of the labour market and to undertake income-generating activities and consultancies to lessen the government’s burden of financing these institutions. For example, the ETP (1995) states:

Education and training institutions shall be encouraged to engage in income-generating activities, including consultancies. Goods and services produced by institutions shall be commercially sold (p.92).

Since the inception of the ETP (1995), Tanzania’s public non-university institutions have offered training at the degree level mainly in the so-called ‘market-driven’ programmes such as business studies, accountancy and financial management, wildlife management, social sciences, community development and social work, human resource management, computer science and engineering science, among other disciplines at undergraduate and masters’ levels. However, they were not originally legally established to offer these programmes. Only one public non-university institution offers a doctorate in business studies in collaboration with a foreign university.

The National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NACTVET) since 2022 regulates non-university institutions through Act 9 of 1997, while the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) regulates university institutions (public and private), while NACTEVET registers and accredits both public and private non-university institutions. There are currently eighteen (18) public non-university institutions in Tanzania mainland recognised by NACTVET and very few private non-university higher education institutions spread all over the country. Private non-university higher education institutions have remained non-degree granting institutions offering advanced diplomas and certificates in hospitality and tourism and hospitality, accountancy and business studies, procurement and supply, clinical medicine, health and allied sciences, and nursing, among other disciplines, mainly to students who cannot qualify

to get admission into competitive public non-university institutions. Although the current higher education policy indirectly encourages academic drifting of private non-university institutions, they have not been able to take advantage of the policy to transform themselves into degree-granting institutions like their counterparts because of a lack of capacity (financially and in terms of Workforce). Therefore, private non-university have remained committed to their original mission of training vocational, practical-oriented skilled middle-level workforce for the nation, although their outputs into the labour market are limited.

There are currently (as of May 12 2022) twelve (12) public universities and eighteen private universities (TCU, 2022). The university sub-system is dominated by private universities (in terms of numbers), but their share of the total student enrollment is very low because of their limited capacity in terms of infrastructure and academic workforce.

Some of the current public universities were formerly non-degree granting institutions. However, they transformed themselves into degree-granting institutions, for example, Ardhi University (formerly Ardhi Institute established to offer training in land management and related studies at certificate and advanced diploma levels), Mzumbe University (formerly Institute of Development Management, established to offer programmes in public administration and management and related studies to middle-level civil servants at certificate and advanced diploma levels, and Sokoine University of Agriculture (formerly a faculty of agriculture of the University of Dar es Salaam).

Other current public universities which were originally non-university institutions or university faculty are Moshi Cooperative University (formerly Moshi Cooperative College, established to offer courses in cooperatives to middle-level employees of cooperative societies at certificate and advanced diploma levels), Mbeya University of Science and Technology (formerly Mbeya Institute of Technology) and the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, formerly a faculty of medicine of the University of Dar es Salaam. On the other hand, the histories of private universities and university colleges in Tanzania show that they all started as institutes or colleges offering courses at certificate, diploma and advanced diploma levels but transformed themselves into universities taking advantage of the new higher education policies I mentioned earlier. From the above discussion, one can conclude that the academic drifting of public higher education institutions is deeply entrenched in Tanzania's history, although it does not draw the attention of higher education researchers and stakeholders.

Drifting Tanzania's public non-higher education institutions into degree-granting institutions has eliminated diversity and differentiation in the higher education system. The two (diversity and differentiation) are important factors of an effective higher education system which significantly contribute to the implementation of the national development agenda. In Tanzania's development context, a diversified and differentiated higher education system is one of the prerequisites for the attainment of the National Development Vision 2025 goals, particularly the goal of "...attainment of a level of tertiary education and training that is commensurate with a critical mass of high-quality Workforce required to respond and master the development challenges at all levels effectively." (URT 1999).

van Vught (2008), applying his theory of differentiation and diversity in higher education, argues that diversity in higher education is one of the major factors associated with the positive performance of higher education systems. van Vught (ibid) further identifies two major types of diversity in the higher education system: external diversity, which refers to differences between higher education institutions, and internal diversity, which refers to differences *within* higher education institutions.

Both types of diversity are affected by academic drifting, but documentary evidence in the Tanzania context of the higher education system shows that external diversity has been most affected.

External diversity relates to the seven categories of diversity in higher education systems identified by Vught (2008): systemic, structural, programmatic, procedural, reputational, constituent, and value and climate diversities. Systemic diversity constitutes differences in institutional type, size and control, while structural diversity refers to differences in organisational or hierarchical structures among higher education institutions. Programmatic diversity refers to academic degree levels and area/discipline (curricular differences), comprehensiveness, mission and vision and emphasis of the academic programmes and types of services provided by higher education institutions.

Procedural diversity relates to the differences in the ways teaching, research and community services or outreach are provided or conducted by higher education institutions. Reputational diversity relates to the perceived differences in higher education institutions based on status and prestige. Constituent diversity refers to differences in constituents served by an institution (students, faculty and administration); and values and climate diversity alludes to differences in the social and cultural environment in higher education institutions (Vught 2008).

All the above categories of diversity in the higher education system have been practically blurred by the academic drifting of public non-university institutions to such an extent that currently, in Tanzania, there are no fundamental differences (based on the above categories of diversity) between public non-university institutions and public universities. Generally, documentary evidence shows that Tanzania's higher education system has experienced the loss of institutional diversity because of the strong academic drift of public non-university institutions, which is unstoppable because it is indirectly encouraged by the current higher education policies.

However, the literature identifies several benefits of differentiation and diversity in higher education systems to individual students, the nation's economy and higher education institutions. For example, Harris and Ellis (2020) argue that the level of diversity of a national higher education system plays an important role in enabling the system to respond to various demands from society. This view is supported by Vught (2008; 2009), who views increasing diversity in higher education as an important strategy for meeting students' needs, promoting personal growth and a healthy society and encouraging critical thinking.

On the other hand, the American Council on Education (2012) identifies the importance of diversity and differentiation in the higher education system as serving the needs of a democratic society and the global economy; strengthening the communities and workplaces; preparing students to become good citizens in complex and pluralistic societies, and enhancing the countries' economic competitiveness because of effective use of the talents and abilities of students and graduates.

Objectives

This paper sought to: 1) document (mainly through extensive literature and documentary reviews) the hitherto undocumented phenomenon of academic drifting in Tanzania's public non-university institutions, 2) explore the driving forces behind academic drifting in the Tanzanian context, 3) identify the forms/types of academic drifting which has taken place in public non-university higher education institutions since the liberalisation of higher education policy in the 1990s and

4) find out the impact of academic drifting of public non-university institutions on the higher education system and development of skilled middle-level workforce in Tanzania.

Generally, the paper attempts to answer the following questions pertinent to academic drifting in Tanzania's public non-university institutions:

- 1) What is the status/magnitude of academic drift in public non-university institutions?
- 2) What are the driving forces behind academic drifting in Tanzania's public non-university institutions?
- 3) What are types or forms of academic drifting which have taken place in public non-university institutions since the liberalisation of the provision of higher education in Tanzania? and
- 4) What has been the impact of academic drifting in Tanzania's public non-university institutions on the higher education system and the development of skilled middle-level workforce? Section two describes the methodology.

Methodology

This paper is based on the principles of a qualitative survey research design, particularly exploratory and descriptive, to accommodate the four objectives of the paper. The survey approach of all public non-university institutions in Tanzania Mainland was useful in exploring and describing the characteristics of the public non-university institutions related to academic drifting based on literature review and basic facts about the institutions, e.g. history of an institution, organisational structure, the missions, visions (old and new) and new "professional" degrees currently being offered were identified through extensive surveys of the respective institutions' web pages. The web pages of the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NACTVET) and the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) were also extensively surveyed to identify registered public non-university institutions and their programmes by NACTVET and academic programmes offered in public non-university institutions accredited by TCU. The TCU also accredits some "professional" degree programmes offered in public non-university institutions, implying that it also promotes academic drifting of non-university institutions.

Data were primarily collected through a review of documents and literature and the survey of the institutions' web pages. Key documents reviewed include: An online List of Registered and Accredited (Non) University Institutions in Tanzania (this provides very comprehensive data about each institution), Requirements to Offer Degree Programmes by Non-University Institutions, National Technical Awards (NTA) Competence Level Descriptors (this provides ten-level competence based awards from certificate to doctorate) and online prospectuses to extract data on academic programmes and their structures, academic organisation and organisational structures of institutions and academic qualifications and ranks of university administrators.

Documents were used because the objectives mainly focused on exploring, documenting and describing the academic drifting phenomenon, which did not require other data collection methods like a questionnaire. The major limitations of the documentary, which are possible inaccuracies and incompleteness, lack of authenticity and credibility, were ameliorated by using data from official web pages of the respective institutions, which are reliable and credible because they are created to provide basic facts and information to potential customers (i.e. students and their parents and other interested parties). Section three below presents various conceptualisations of academics drifting from research on higher education and literature.

Conceptualising Academic Drift: Towards a Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

Academic drift, a central concept in higher education scholarship for the past century (Kumar, 2022), has been described in the vast literature as the “academisation” or “universitization” process of non-university higher education institutions (Griffioen & de Jong, 2012); “a tendency of prestige-seeking low status’ non-university higher education institutions to seek to develop into universities by mimicking the practices of established elite universities (Holmberg & Hallonsten, 2014 p.181, Kumar 2022). Schwartzman (2011) describes academic drift as the tendency of educational institutions to raise their academic statuses by imitating the curricula and organisational structures of their more prestigious counterparts. Academic drift “is mostly described as the attempt of non-university institutions to strive for an academic status, recognition, and rights associated with university institutions in an upward movement to resemble the university” (Griffioen & de Jong 2012 (p.1), citing Christensen and Erno-Kjølhed, 2011, Kyvik, 2007; Techler, 2008). The concept was originally used to refer to the tendency of the U.K. polytechnics to develop academic activities comparable to prestigious traditional universities at the end of the 20th century (Griffioen & de Jong 2012, p.1).

Using the snake metaphor (a snake with a head, middle and tail) alluding to the snakelike procession of academic drift, Riesman (1956) described academic drift as the tendency of universities at the “tail” (tail universities) attempting to model themselves after those universities at the “head” (prestigious universities). Riesman further argued that academic drift occurred when less prestigious institutions (“tail institutions”) followed strategic direction laid down by institutions with reputational and political capital (Reisman, 1956). Although Reisman’s study is very old, documentary evidence shows his publication on academic drifting was seminal and classical, thus worth citing!

Aspiring to achieve the activities and status of traditional universities is one of the important characteristics of academic drifting of non-university education institutions (Griffioen & de Jong, 2012 citing Christensen & Erno-Kjølhed, 2011; Edwards & Miller, 2008; Harwood, 2010; Neave, 1979). The academic drift of higher education institutions—a widely researched phenomenon in Europe, U.K., U.S. and Nordic countries—has also been conceptualized as:

- A tendency of prestige-seeking lower-status academic institutions to adopt the substantive and symbolic forms of more elite universities (Kumar, 2022);
- Mission creep/mission drift is where a higher education institution slowly moves away or strays from its original stated mission (Henderson, 2009; Gonzales, 2017);
- Institutional drift (Voronov, Glynn, & Weber, 2022);
- Institutional isomorphism (Tight, 2015);
- A move towards academic practices in vocationally-oriented programmes in higher education institutions expressed in the change of curriculum, degree structure and research (Erixon & Inger, 2017);
- A process in which non-university institutions aspire to operate like universities (Kopatz & Piltz, 2015, p.310); and
- The influence of the attractiveness of the university status on non-university institutions to strive to acquire the same standing (CEDEFOP 2009 Europe). This conceptualisation

of academic drift is also supported by Christensen and Newberry (2015) in the context of academic drift processes in European and American professional engineering education outside universities. Citing Trow 2003 (p.3), they observe:

The older research universities, with their international reputations and prestige, their high academic standards, their great libraries and laboratories, their relatively favourable funding and provision for research, their links to government and the high status of their staff and students everywhere, exert a powerful pull on all other kinds of colleges and universities....(p.5).

All the above conceptualisations of academic drift apply to the description of the process of the academic drift of non-university higher education institutions in the Tanzanian context, which dates back to the late 1990s when the government liberalised the provision of higher education. What are the driving forces of academic drift in Tanzania's non-university institutions? In the following sub-section, I attempt to answer the above question.

Driving Forces of Academic Drift of Non-University Institutions in the Tanzanian Context

Although in the Tanzanian context, higher education researchers have not studied the academic drifting phenomenon, research and literature from other countries provide some explanations of the driving forces behind the academic drift of non-university higher education institutions, which applies in our context.

Globally, as research literature shows, the academic drift of non-university institutions is a response to conditions of survival uncertainties experienced by these institutions

created by, among other things, globalisation, internationalisation, marketisation of higher education, strong competition for funding and students among institutions, demand for greater access and wide participation in higher education, efficiency pressures related to resource constraints created by the states' withdrawal of funding or reduced budgetary allocations to higher education institutions, the concept of students as consumers, and credentialing pressures on students to be able to compete in the labour market" (Christiansen & Newberry, 2015 p. 33, citing Molesworth et al., 2011 & Tuchman, 2009).

Jacquette (2013, p. 514), referring to the mission drift of baccalaureate institutions in the USA, makes almost a similar argument related to the constraints created by state withdrawal of funding. She argues that baccalaureate colleges became universities by adopting curricula associated with the comprehensive model in response to declining freshmen enrollment, resulting in declining enrollment-related revenues.

In a broader context, the academic drift of Tanzania's non-university higher education institutions can be explained by some organisational and institutional change theories and the institutional theory (Morphew & Huisman, 2010; Gluckler & Lenz, 2018; Voronov, Glynn & Weber, 2021). For example, some organisational theories view organisational change as a paradigm shift in an organisation's business (Simsek & Louis, 1994). The paradigm shift is unavoidable and crucial if an organisation is to remain competitive and relevant and survive in a changing environment. Public non-university institutions in Tanzania had to change how they conducted their businesses to remain relevant and competitive (apparently with public universities). Morphew and Huisman (2010) tout the institutional theory to reframe research on the academic drift in higher education systems, arguing that the theory "presents a useful lens that examines and explains why academic drift occurs in higher education systems." Voronov, Glynn and Weber advances the theory of

institutional drift, arguing that institutional drift leads to institutional change. Glucker and Lenz (2018), in their analysis of drift and morphosis in institutional change, explore the dynamic nature of how institutions can change or sustain their forms and functions in response to changes in regulations, policies and institutional contexts. In response to the changing higher education policy (through Education Act No. 10 of 1995), public non-university institutions in Tanzania drifted to offering new “professional degrees” replacing advanced diplomas (change of functions) and introduced new organisational structures (changed their forms).

In more specific terms, the academic drift of Tanzania's public non-university institutions can be explained through the lenses of coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism, all major tenets of institutional theory. Coercive isomorphism results in the sense that the academic drift of public non-university institutions in Tanzania was “coerced” by the 1995 Education and Training Policy, which liberalised the provision of higher education and encouraged higher education institutions to engage in income-generating activities in order to supplement inadequate government budget. The National Higher Education Policy of 1999, which encouraged higher education institutions to re-design their curricula in response to the changing labour market demands, also “coerced” them into academic drifting. Public non-university institutions had to repackage their academic programmes in line with new labour market demands, introducing “market-driven programmes” in every public non-university institution. Mimetic isomorphism stems from survival uncertainties because of competition with other higher education institutions, which induced public non-university institutions to imitate the behaviour and organisational structures of successful and prestigious public universities, particularly the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's oldest public university. Documentary evidence shows that the majority of the public non-university institutions imitated the organisational structures of the University of Dar es Salaam and the majority of the degree programmes offered in public non-university institutions have been copied from the University of Dar es Salaam. Academic drifting of Tanzania's non-university institutions can also be attributed to normative pressure (normative isomorphism), which stems from professionalism. Public non-university institutions in Tanzania were compelled to abandon their advanced diploma programmes in favour of “professional degrees” in order to compete with public universities. The quest for professionalism leads to homogeneity within the higher education system,

Apart from the above organisational theories, in the Tanzanian context, one of the driving forces behind the academic drift of non-university higher education institutions is the *conditions of uncertainty* of survival in the higher education market [with their old vocational-oriented academic offerings] caused by excessive marketisation/liberalisation of higher education. Conditions of uncertainty in Tanzania's non-university higher education institutions have been, among other factors, caused by declining or inadequate government budgetary allocations to the institutions. This factor has forced public non-university institutions to adopt different survival strategies, including academic drifting mainly Centreed on offering market-friendly degree programmes similar to public universities to attract more students, expand enrollment, and hence more enrollment revenue. As Christensen and Newberry (2015) argue, under uncertainty, organisational decision-makers tend to mimic the behaviour of other organisations within their environments to survive.

Referring to the marketisation of the university sector in Kenya and Uganda, Munene (2015) makes observations relevant to explaining the academic drift of Tanzania's non-university higher education institutions. He argues that as universities get closer to the marketplace, they experience three fundamental facts which reshape their character and life. The first is the demand by society and other stakeholders, such as potential employers of graduates, that universities

(by implication and other higher education institutions) offer academic programmes that have immediate utility and are instrumental.

Second is the shift in the governance and administrative structures from a collegiate model and university autonomy and faculty academic freedom to market-based governance, which embraces revenue generation through the sale of teaching, research and services to supplement inadequate government subventions. The third is competition between academics and institutions for scarce resources and related privileges in the higher education market.

The marketisation of higher education in Tanzania in the late 1980s, necessitated by the changing labour market demands, is one of the driving forces behind the academic drift of public non-university institutions. In this context, the academic drift of public non-university higher education institutions should be viewed as an institutional survival strategy in an increasingly competitive higher education market.

According to my observation and experience in the higher education sector, one of the driving forces behind the academic drifting of non-university public higher education institutions is educational credential inflation, clearly articulated by Collins (2011 & 1979). The Tanzanian society is increasingly becoming *the credential society* obsessed with higher education credentials where certification in the form of “academic degrees” matters more than other educational credentials such as the three-year advanced diplomas, formerly offered by public non-university higher education institutions and were regarded as equivalent to first university degrees by employers and were respected. Obsession with higher education credentials is also visible among Tanzania’s political class (politicians, members of parliament, cabinet ministers) who vigorously strives to “earn” doctorates (PhDs) (*honoris causa* and regular) to be bestowed upon the title of “doctor” to spice up their current “official” title of “honorable.”

Advanced diplomas certification offered by public non-university institutions in contemporary Tanzania lost substantive social and economic value in the society and the occupational and labour markets, thus creating demand for higher levels of higher education certification (in this case, undergraduate and master degrees), leading to the introduction of a plethora of “professional” undergraduate degrees and “professional” master’s degrees in every public non-university higher education institution. Public non-university education institutions had to respond to the above demand by phasing out old programmes and introducing appealing degree programmes and other new programmes at different levels aligned to the Tanzania National Qualifications Framework. Educational credential inflation, “a largely self-driven process feeding on itself and also supply driven by the expansion of schooling” (Collins, 2011, p. 229), could be one of the major driving forces or the main dynamic behind all types of drifts which have taken place in Tanzania’s public non-university institutions.

On the other hand, Tanzanians’ excessive obsession with higher educational credentials and certifications in the form of academic degrees (what Fry, 1981 calls’ degreeism’) can also be explained by using Ronald Dore’s *Diploma Disease*, “a process for qualification earning for the sake of job placement and further education/training where the primary motive of learning is a certification for job/occupational selection” (Dore, 1976, p.121). According to Dore, cited in Little (1997), diploma disease is a pathology of all societies where people (vigorously) pursue certificates to improve their chances of accessing life opportunities allocated based on educational certificates.

One of the consequences of diploma disease, especially in developing countries like Tanzania, is qualification escalation or qualification inflation, i.e. a rise in the qualifications required for

a particular job (Dore, 1976, cited in Little, 1997). Qualification escalation or inflation could be one of the factors which compelled public non-university higher education institutions in Tanzania to upgrade their advanced diploma programmes into degree programmes.

In the Tanzania context, the academic drift of public non-university higher education institutions has also been caused by the inability of traditional public universities to absorb all qualifying students aspiring for degrees to enhance their employability and social mobility. Enrollment in public universities and colleges (currently 19) is low because of inadequate infrastructure and a shortage of academic staff. For example, in the 2017/18 academic year, enrollment in public universities was 108,012 students (60.7%) and 69,951(39.3%) students in private universities (TCU, 2019).

In short, documentary evidence shows that the driving forces behind the academic drift of Tanzania's public non-university institutions have been internal and external but largely external, driven by the need and urgency to survive in a changing external environment. Section five below presents some empirical evidence of academic drift in Tanzania's non-university institutions.

Academic Drift of Public Non-University Higher Education Institutions in Tanzania: Some Empirical Evidence

Table 1 below shows a list of NACTVET registered public non-university higher education institutions originally established by the government in the late 1960s and early and late 1970s to provide vocational and practical-oriented training to skilled middle-level workforce at certificate, ordinary and advanced diploma levels, but currently offering a plethora of 'labour market-driven 'professional degrees.'

Table 1: NACTVET Registered Public Non-University Higher Education Institutions in Tanzania Mainland, 2022

Institution	Year Established & Original Mandate
Arusha Technical College (ATC)	First established in 1978 as Technical College Arusha by the Governments of Tanzania and the Federal Republic of Germany to train technicians for three years to the level of Full Technician Certificate in automotive, civil, transport and mechanical engineering. Changed name to Arusha Technical College in 2007.
Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology (DIT)	Established in 1997, formerly known as Dar es Salaam Technical College (DTC) established in 1962. The DTC was the first technical training institution in Tanzania to train technicians under the London City and Guilds Training Programme in order to enhance its contribution to the national capacity building in the technical workforce
Institute of Social Work	Re-established in 2002, but was first established in 1974 as the National Social Welfare Training Institute (NSWTI), offering a two-year ordinary diploma programme designed to address the problem of social welfare workforce shortage facing the Government's Social Welfare Department by then
Tengeru Institute of Community Development (TICD)	Re-established in 2013 to offer degree programmes and postgraduate diplomas in response to the labour market needs. Originally it was established as Community Development Training Institute in 1963 to offer orientation programmes to extension officers to equip them with community development skills necessary for catalysing community development actions

Institute of Rural Development Planning (IRDP)	Established in 1980 to provide basic training for rural development practitioners to alleviate the shortage of skilled workforce in rural development
Institute of Finance Management (IFM)	This is the oldest public non-university institution established in 1972 to provide training at certificate and diploma levels in banking, insurance, social protection, accountancy and business-related studies to the central government employees and other public corporations
Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy (MNMA)	Established in 2005. It was first established in 1958 as Kivukoni College for adults who did not have qualifications to join formal educational institutions, designed to resemble the Ruskin College of Oxford in the United Kingdom. It was later transformed into Kivukoni Ideological College in 1961 to inculcate the Ruling Party's ideology of Socialism and Self Reliance and later Kivukoni Academy of Social Sciences (KASS).
College of African Wildlife Management (CAWM)	It was established in 1963 as Mweka Institute of Wildlife Management to provide professional and technical training to African wildlife officials and managers.
National Institute of Transport (NIT)	It was established in 1975 as a training wing of the National Transport Company (NTC) charged with the responsibility of strengthening the human resource capabilities of transport operatives and middle-level managers of subsidiary companies of the NTC. Re-established in 1982 as an autonomous higher learning institution to offer training in all modes of transport at Full Technician Certificate (FTC) levels for graduates of ordinary secondary education who did not improve quality to join advanced secondary education.
Institute of Adult Education (IAE)	It was established in 1960 as an extramural studies section of Makerere University College under the University of London. In 1963 it was upgraded into a department and placed under the Dar es Salaam University College.
Tanzania Institute of Accountancy (TIA)	Established in 2003 and formerly known as Dar es Salaam School of Accountancy (DSA), it was founded in 1973 to offer short- and long-term courses for Lower and Middle-Level Government Accounting Personnel to improve their job performance.
College of Business Education (CBE)	It was established in 1965 to train personnel in commercial and industrial sectors at the Basic Certificate Level.
Institute of Accountancy Arusha (IAA)	It was established in 1990 to train accountants at certificate and advanced diploma levels.
Tanzania Public Service College (TPSC)	Established in 2000 to offer comprehensive training to public servants in the context of Public Service Reforms. Formerly known as Magogoni Secretarial College established to provide secretarial studies to public servants.
Dar es Salaam Maritime Institute (DMI)	It was established in 1991 to cater to the needs of the shipping industry. DMI drifted from the Dar es Salaam Maritime Training Unit (DMTU), established in 1978 as a training wing of the Tanzania Coastal Shipping Line (TACOSHILI) to fulfil the needs of well-trained seafarers. It is a Centre of Excellence in Maritime Education and Training in the East African region.

Water Institute (W.I.)	It was established in 2016 and first as Water Resources Institute in 1974 as a Ministry of Water and Energy unit to meet the needs of middle-level water technicians for the country's 20-Year Rural Water Supply Programme (1971-1991). Later the Institute changed its name to Rwegarulira Water Resources Institute in 1986. Rwegarulira Water Resources Institute changed its name to Water Development Management Institute (WMDI) in 2008, offering water supply and sanitation engineering, hydrology and meteorology programmes. Hydrogeology, Water Well Drilling, Water Laboratory Technology and Irrigation Engineering at the Technician and Basic Technician Levels. In 2016, WMDI changed its name to Water Institute.
Centre for Foreign Relations (CFR)	Established in 1978 to train career foreign service officers of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Tanzania & Mozambique
Institute of Tax Administration (ITA)	It was established in 1982 as a training Centre for customs and tax officials from the Ministry of Finance. ITA was registered as a higher learning institution under NACTE in 2007. It is a training wing of the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA).

Source: Institutions' official websites and NACTVET website

Forms of Academic Drift in Tanzania's Public Non-University Institutions

Documentary evidence (from institution's websites and prospectuses) shows that academic drift in Tanzania's public non-university institutions has mainly taken the following forms generally discussed in the preceding sections but specifically discussed in this section:

- 1) Reorganisation of advanced diploma curricula and structures to mimic undergraduate degree programmes in public universities through the introduction of undergraduate "professional degrees" and "professional graduate degrees" and
- 2) Adopting organisational structures and models that resemble those of public universities—this form of academic drift has taken place in tandem with the adoption of academic titles/ranks and qualifications used in public universities for academic staff and academic leaders and embracing research and consultancy cultures in their imitated organisational structures and new visions and missions. The new visions and missions in all surveyed public non-university institutions also include the ambition of becoming "Centres of excellence" in their relevant disciplines. Some profess to become "world-class institutions," as with the prestigious public universities in Tanzania (see Table 2). In addition to the above changes, the chief executive officers of Tanzania's public non-university institutions have the titles of "Rector" (formerly Principal), academic units are organised into departments, and some institutions' academic departments are housed in faculties as in traditional universities. The "Rector" title sounds more prestigious and closer to the title of "Vice Chancellor" than "Principal."

Reorganisation of Advanced Diploma Curricular and Structures to Mimic Undergraduate Programmes in Public Universities through the Introduction of Undergraduate "Professional Degrees" and "Professional Graduate Degrees"

Documentary evidence shows that all nineteen (19) public non-university higher education institutions surveyed are currently offering undergraduate and master degrees whose structures and organisations resemble those of public universities. Some institutions offer the same courses

in public universities by name and content. This is not surprising because some senior academics from public universities were involved in designing several degree courses currently offered in public non-university institutions. Unfortunately, there is no policy guideline on developing new courses in higher education institutions; every institution decides how to develop courses.

All nineteen (19) (100%) public non-university institutions have phased out their three-year advanced diploma programmes designed to offer professional and practical/vocational-oriented training for middle-level workforce in various fields in favour of “professional degrees,” implying that these degrees are founded on the principles of practice versus theoretical principles typical of the majority of academic degrees offered in traditional universities (Garraway & Winberg, 2019). In essence, the so-called professional degrees offered in Tanzania’s public non-university institutions are theoretical academic degrees organised and structured according to degree programmes offered in public universities. Of nineteen (19) public non-university institutions, only one institution offers a doctoral programme in collaboration with a university in a Nordic country.

The drift from advanced diploma programmes to “professional degrees” in Tanzania’s non-university institutions was more of a reputational marketing ploy than a substantive change in content (Garraway & Winberg, 2019). The content of “professional degrees” is not significantly different from the abandoned advanced diploma programmes, except that these new programmes are labeled “degrees” to attract students in a country obsessed with “degrees” and where “degreeism” (Fry, 1981) is a disease.

Table 2 below summarises current first-degree offerings in Tanzania’s public non-university institutions, manifesting one of the major characteristics of academic drifting in these institutions. Table 2 also summarises new missions and visions of the institutions manifesting mission drift, a dimension of academic drift.

Table 2: New Undergraduate Degree Programmes, Missions and Visions of Tanzania’s Public Non-University HEIs, June 2022

Institution	Old Name	New Undergraduate “Professional” Degree Programmes	New Vision/Mission
Arusha Technical College	Technical College Arusha	Civil & Irrigation Engineering, Computer science, Electrical and Biomedical Engineering	To become a Centre of excellence that provides a national and international high-level human resource through exemplary technical education and training
College of Business Education	None	Accountancy, Business Administration, Business Studies with Education; Information & Communication Technology Legal and Industrial Metrology; Marketing; Mathematics; Metrology & Standardisation and Procurement and Supplies	To provide demand-driven and competence-based education through applied research and consultancies

College of African Wildlife Management Mweka	College of African Wildlife Management	Wildlife Management and Wildlife Tourism	Providing the highest standards of technical training by engaging a global community and undertaking research and consultancy in order to meet the needs of wildlife and tourism management in Africa
Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology	Dar es Salaam Technical College	Computer science, Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, Telecommunications Engineering, & Technology and Science & Laboratory Technology	To provide competence-based technical education through research, innovation and development of appropriate technology
Dar es Salaam Maritime Institute	Dar es Salaam Maritime Training Unit	Marine Engineering Technology, Maritime Transport, Shipping & Logistics Management, Naval Architecture & Offshore Engineering, Procurement, Logistics and Supply, Mechanical and Marine Engineering & Gas and Oil Engineering	To become a Centre of Excellence in Marine Education and Training in the East African Region
Centre for Foreign Relations	None	International Relations and Diplomacy	To pursue scholarly and strategic teaching, research, policy and policy advocacy and outreach services in international relations and diplomacy
Institute of Accountancy Arusha	None	Accountancy, Economics and Finance, Accountancy with I.T., Finance and Banking, Insurance and Risk Management, <i>Cyber Security</i> , Computer Science, Banking with Apprenticeship, Economics and Taxation, and Procurement	To be an exemplary Centre of excellence in modern business training, research and consultancy
Institute of Finance Management	None	Accounting, Banking and Finance, Economics and Finance, Actuarial Science, Computer Science, Insurance and Risk Management, Social Protection and Tax Management	Provision of dynamic, quality academic and professional training through integrated training, research and consultancy in financial studies and related disciplines

Institute of Adult Education	Extra Mural Studies Section of the Makerere University College under the University of London. Upgraded into Department under Dar es Salaam University College, and Institute of Adult Education in 1975	Adult and Continuing Education and Adult Education and Community Development	Continuous designing, developing and delivering lifelong education programmes through blended learning and research
Institute of Rural Development Planning	None	Development Economics, Regional Development Planning, Project Planning and Management, Environmental Planning, Human Resource Planning and Management, Population and Development Planning	To become a Centre of excellence in academic and professional work in rural development planning
Institute of Social Work	National Social Welfare Training Institute	Social Work, Human Resource Management, Labour Relations and Public Management	To become the leading provider of high-quality training, research and consultancy services in social work, all responsible for societal and global needs.
Tengeru Institute of Community Development	Community Development Training Institute	Community Development, Gender and Community Development, Project Planning and Management	Become a Centre of excellence for sustainable social and economic development and train technically competent professionals

Institute of Rural Development Planning	None	Development Economics; Regional Development Planning; Project Planning & Management; Urban Development and Environmental Management, Environmental Planning & Management; Development Finance & Investment Planning; Human Resource Planning & Management; Business Planning & Management; and Population; Development Planning & Planning and Community Development	To become a Centre of excellence for planning for sustainable development
Institute of Finance Management	None	Accounting, Accounting with I.T., Information Technology, Computer Science, Insurance and Risk Management, Social Protection, Actual Sciences, Taxations, Economics and Finance	Provision of academic and professional training through training, research and consultancy; become a world-class Centre of academic and professional excellence
Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy	Kivukoni Ideological College, Kivukoni Academy of Social Sciences	Education, Community Development, Human Resource Management, Management of	Becoming a Centre of excellence for knowledge acquisition and adoption; advancement of lifelong learning through excellent teaching, research and consultancy
Tanzania Institute of Accountancy	Dar es Salaam School of Accountancy	Accounting, Public Sector Accounting and Finance, Procurement and Logistics Management, Business Administration, Human Resource Management and Marketing & Public Relations	To be an institute of excellence in providing quality business education, research and consultancy services in Africa. Provision of quality education, research and consultancy in relevant areas
Tanzania Public Service College	Dar es Salaam Secretarial College	Records and Archives Management; Secretarial Studies and Administration	To become a global Centre of excellence in competency development, knowledge sharing, applied research and consultancy for effective public service

Institute of Tax Administration	None	Customs and Tax Management	To be a globally recognised Centre of excellence in customs and taxation training in Tanzania Provide high-quality competency-based training, research and consultancy services, customs and taxation studies
Water Institute	Water Resources Institute, Water Development Management Institute	Community Development in Water Supply and Sanitation; Hydrology and Water Well Drilling; Engineering Hydrology and Sanitation Engineering	To become a Centre of excellence for providing technical education and training, research and consultancy services for the management of water resources in Tanzania and East Africa

Source: Adapted from the institutions' official websites and the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NACTVET) (former NACTE) website.

Adoption of Organisational Structures and Models of Public Universities

The second major form of academic drift of public non-university institutions has been mimicking the organisational structures and models used in traditional universities, including academic qualifications and titles of academic staff and leaders. There is no policy on organisational structures of public no-university institutions. The governing boards of institutions determine the organisational structures of institutions. A simplified flat horizontal organisational structure of all public universities in Tanzania showing top positions only is composed of the following key positions:

- 1) Chancellor
- 2) University Council
- 3) Vice-Chancellor- Chief Executive Officer position assisted by two or three deputies, depending on the university;
- 4) Deputy Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs, Finance and Administration, and Research and Knowledge Exchange.

Figure 1 below depicts a simplified organogram of public universities in Tanzania.

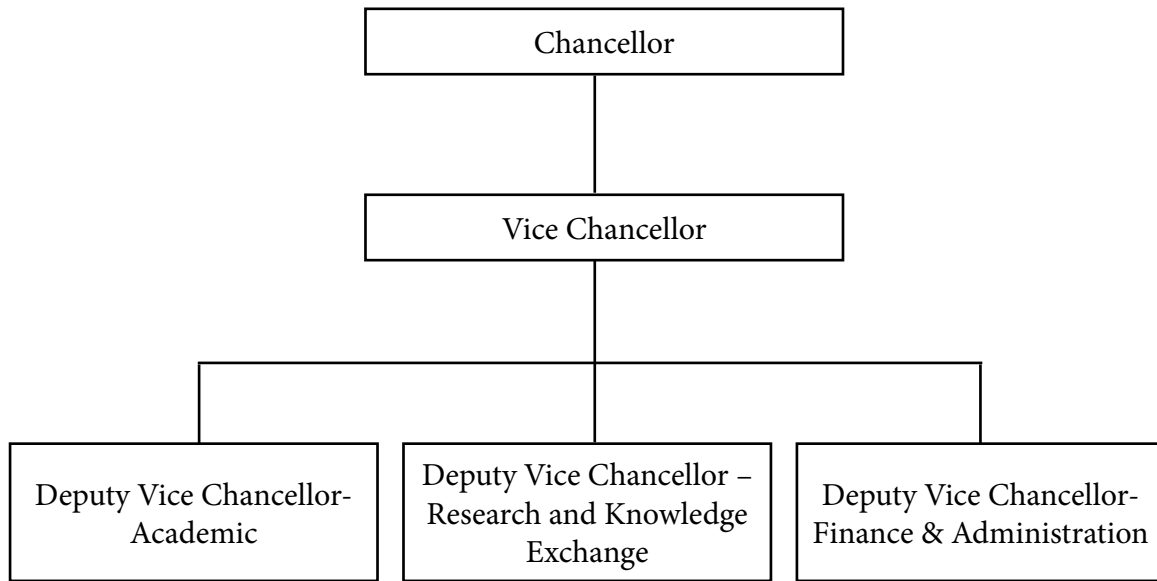


Figure 1: A Simplified Organisational Structure of Public Universities in Tanzania

A simplified flat organisational structure of public non-university institutions is composed of the following three key structures imitating public universities’ organisational structures (see Figure 2):

- 1) Governing Boards/Councils/Board of Directors -equivalent to the Council in public universities;
- 2) Rector (18 non-university institutions, or 95% use the title of Rector equivalent to Vice Chancellor in public universities,
- 3) Deputy Rectors for Academic, Research and Consultancy (ARC) and Deputy Rectors for Planning, Finance and Administration (PFA). These two positions are “similar” to Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Deputy Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration positions in public universities, except that in the first position, a research and consultancy portfolio has been added—apparently to imitate the position of Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE) in public universities. Including research and consultancy functions in the first deputy rector position aligns with the institutions’ new missions and visions in a new institutional context of academic drift. It reflects the institutions’ ambitions to transition from a teaching culture to a research and consultancy culture—the third mission of the universities (Campagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020). The above unrealistic ambition augurs well with the institutions’ unrealistic mission of becoming “Centres of Excellence” and “world-class higher education institutions” in the relevant disciplines professed by all public non-higher education institutions surveyed (See Table 2). The ambitions to transform from teaching to research and consultancy and “world-class” institutions are unrealistic because they lack the human resource capacity and skills to achieve the above ambitions. For example, these institutions have very few academic staff with doctorates and rectors, and their deputies who hold the title of “professor” have not been internally promoted to those ranks but have been employed by public universities.

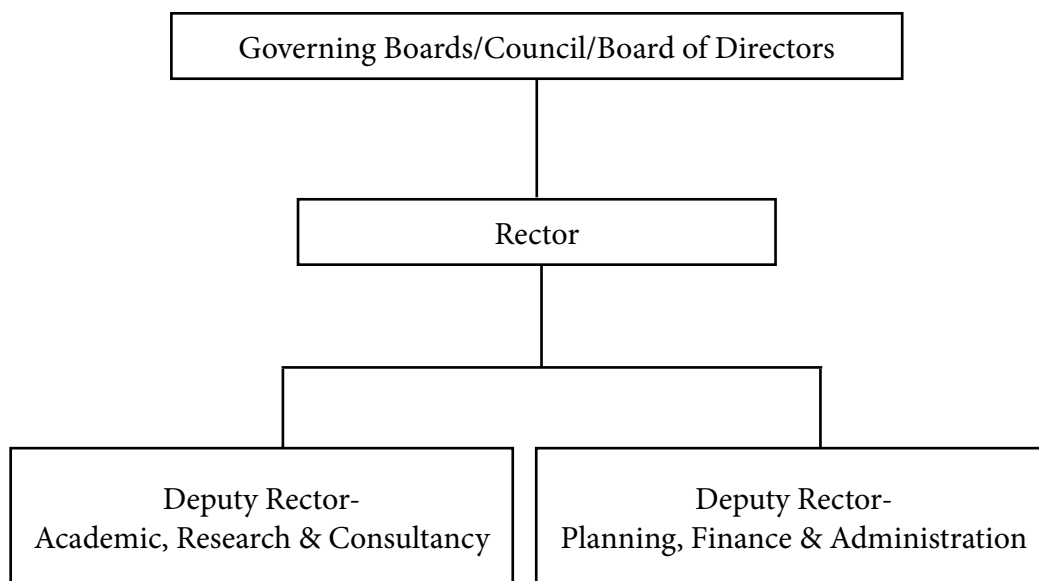


Figure 2: A Simplified Organisational Structure of Public Non-University Institutions in Tanzania

Figures 1 and 2 above show a convergence into a single organisational model between public universities (“head institutions”) and public non-university institutions (“tail institutions”) according to the *snake metaphor* of academic drifting of higher education institutions advocated by Riesman (1956).

Apart from adopting public universities’ organisational structures, Tanzania’s public non-university institutions have also adopted academic qualifications, ranks and titles applied in public universities for senior academic leaders and academic staff. For example, 18 rectors of nineteen (19) (95%) public non-university institutions had doctorates, and 8 or 47% were professors. Of the 38 deputy rectors for academic, research and consultancy (ARC) and planning, finance and administration (PFA) surveyed in 19 non-university institutions, 29 or 76.3 % have doctorates and eight (8) or 2% have the title of professor. However, the source of data does not show whether these rectors and their deputies with the professor title are associate or full professors. Tanzania non-university institutions have also adopted academic titles used in universities for academic staff. In Tanzania universities, as is the case in other East African universities (public and private), academic staff are ranked or graded (in ascending order) as follows:

- 1) Tutorial Assistant
- 2) Assistant lecturer
- 3) Lecturer
- 4) Senior lecturer
- 5) Associate Professor and
- 6) Full professor

The above academic titles are used in Tanzania’s public non-university institutions to grade academic staff, replacing the old “tutor” academic title used by these institutions before academic drifting. Generally, empirical evidence shows that academic drift of non-university institutions in Tanzania has been “a drift upwards to semi-university status” (Neave, 1979, p.153).

What has been the long-term impact of academic drifting of public non-university institutions in Tanzania on the higher education system and on the development of skilled middle-level workforce for national development—and original *raison d'être* for establishing these institutions? Is the academic drift of Tanzania's public non-university higher education institutions good or bad? Is the academic drift of these institutions avoidable in the Tanzanian context? In the following section, I attempt to answer the above questions.

Impact of Academic Drift of Tanzania's Public Non-University Institutions

Impact on the Higher Education System

Let me attempt to answer the last two questions posed above as a starting point in this section. Is the upward academic drift of Tanzania's non-university higher education institutions to semi or university status good or bad? The answer is that it is bad or undesirable because the movement has unintended negative consequences on the Tanzania higher education system and developing skilled middle-level workforce

Is the academic drift of Tanzania's public non-university higher education institutions avoidable or stoppable? The answer is no. Why? Because in the Tanzanian context, due to the extensive marketisation of higher education and inadequate government budgetary allocations to public higher education institutions, academic drift is "necessary for institutional survival in the marketplace" (Christensen & Newberry, 2015, p.17, citing Jaquette, 2013). On the other hand, the academic drift of Tanzania's public non-university institutions is an imperative of institutional transformation. Kraak (2009) referring to the academic drift of South African technicians, argue that the academic drift of non-university institutions is an imperative of institutional change which cannot be stopped. Another factor leading to the unstoppable academic drifting of Tanzania's public non-university institutions is Tanzanians' obsession with degrees ("degreeism").

Academic drifting has several invisible but counterproductive impacts on the higher education system. The major ones are:

- Blurring of the boundaries of the hitherto binary higher education system (Gellert, 1993) as institutions and faculty members in non-university institutions continue to mimic different aspects of the established and prestigious public universities, particularly the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's oldest public university, e.g. organisational structures, academic organisation and structuring and practically copying and pasting academic programmes offered in public universities yet the government established them to train and meet the specific labour market requirements and produce middle-level workforce who are more practical and vocational-oriented than graduates from traditional public universities;
- Eliminating alternatives to university education (Teichler, 2008) for those uninterested in pursuing "professional degrees," reducing the diversity of the higher education system and obfuscating institutional differentiation in the higher education system. Schwartzman (2011), referring to academic drift in education in Brazil, argues that academic drift has been a major obstacle to education differentiation or diversification and outlines the importance of educational/institutional diversification or differentiation as follows:
 - a) Better access to (higher) education for students with different socioeconomic backgrounds and types of academic training and further offer most of them real opportunities to succeed;
 - b) Promotion of socioeconomic mobility by offering several educational alternatives;

- c) Better response to labour market demands by producing human capital with many different skills sets (workforce mix); and
- d) We offer education to a heterogeneous public and respond to the labour market's multiple demands.

Van Vught (2007), referring to external diversity, i.e. differences *between* higher education institutions, argues that increased diversity of the higher education system is an important strategy to meet student needs and expand access to higher education to students with different educational backgrounds, meets the needs of the labour market because it increases the variety of specialisations, and permits the combination of the elite and mass higher education. As a consequence of academic drifting, the above benefits of the diversification of higher education are missing in current Tanzania's higher education which is no longer binary in structure but a single (unitary) structure composed of degree-granting institutions, albeit at different levels.

Impact on the Development of Middle-Level workforce and Attainment of workforce Mix

The academic drift of Tanzania's public non-university institutions also negatively impacts the development of middle-level workforce and the attainment of a workforce mix strategically suited to spearhead *Tanzania National Development Vision 2025*. Middle-level workforce in the context of this paper refer to workforce with vocational or practical-oriented professional skills originally trained in public non-university institutions (institutes and colleges) through three-year advanced diplomas. Due to academic drifting, all public higher education institutions in Tanzania are currently degree-granting institutions producing high-level workforce (according to the International Classification of Occupations). The above practice implies that higher education institutions are no longer producing middle-level workforce; therefore, there is no balanced workforce mix (a mix of high, middle, and low qualifications and skills), one of the essential factors in the balanced economic development of nations (Harris, 1970). Harris argues:

For developing countries, middle manpower development and the kinds of institutions needed for such development (technical colleges, junior colleges, post-secondary vocational schools, business colleges) should be given top priority for investment (p.1)

Harris (ibid.) further cautions that undue emphasis placed on the "wrong" level of education or kind of education at a given stage of development may hurt economic growth (p.5). In Tanzania, due to academic drifting and high social demand for degrees, academic degrees credentials (university education) are given undue emphasis and high social value than other academic credentials, such as diplomas leading to the inverted workforce pyramid with only two levels: high-level workforce, i.e. several degree holders from both university and non-university institutions, and low-level workforce composed of few diplomas and certificate holders because diploma and certificate academic programmes mainly from non-university institutions attract very few students who are unqualified to get admissions into "professional degree" programmes summarised in Figure 3 below. This inverted workforce pyramid or structure is counterproductive to balance national development.

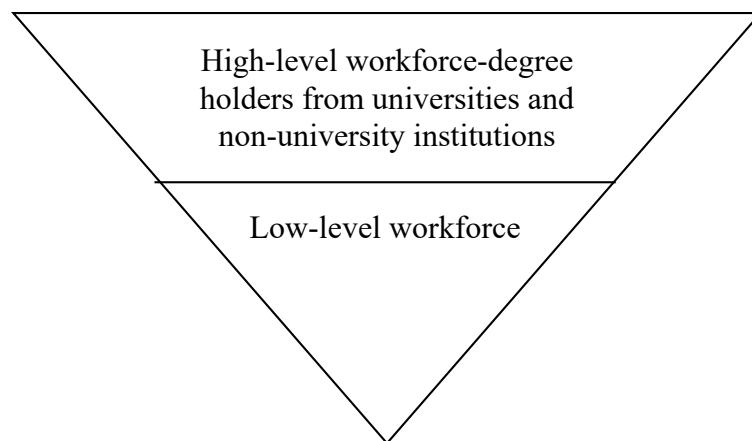


Figure 3: Inverted workforce Pyramid in the Context of Academic Drift of Public Non-University Institutions in Tanzania

Conclusions and Recommendations

Empirical and documentary evidence presented in this paper shows that all of Tanzania's public non-university institutions originally mandated to train middle-level workforce critical for the nation's economic and social development through various certificate and academic diploma programmes have drifted into degree-granting institutions, changed their organisational structures, missions and visions to resemble those of established and prestigious public universities. This is the essence of the upward academic drift of public non-university institutions in Tanzania—which is likely to continue unabated because of uncertainties and the competitive higher education market and environment in which public non-universities institutions are currently operating. Uncertainties are caused, *among other things*, by globalisation, internationalisation, and extensive marketisation of higher education worldwide, which has turned higher education into a commodity.

The explanatory framework of academic drift of public non-university institutions lies in the organisational change and institutional theories focusing on the institutional isomorphism perspective, which among other issues, stresses that organisations have to change and adapt to the existence of and pressures of other (superior) organisations in their environment in order to survive. Adaptation processes tend to lead to homogenisation (Vught, 2007, p.4, citing DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

The academic drift of Tanzanian's public non-university institutions has had a long-term impact on the hitherto binary higher education system in terms of eliminating external diversity and differentiation and has also eliminated alternatives to university education to students who may not be interested in pursuing academic degrees in non-university institutions.

Furthermore, academic drift has also thwarted the development of middle-level workforce and curtailed the attainment of a balanced workforce mix important for balanced economic and social development. While the academic drift of Tanzania's public non-university institutions is unstoppable because of external forces, a policy to guide and streamline the drifting process is required to avoid the current haphazard academic drifting in Tanzania's non-university institutions.

I strongly recommend enacting a policy guideline by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to restrict the development of new degree courses in public non-university institutions.

Public non-university higher education institutions should also be compelled by a policy from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to reinstitute advanced diploma programmes that produce practical and vocational-oriented middle-level workforce for the nation's development. Finally there is a need to have clear guidelines on the organisational structures of public non-university institutions from the Ministry to make them different from those of public universities.

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